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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 2192

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASTANA 002080

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/A, DRL

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TAGS: PREL EAID EINV KISL KDEM AF KZ

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: FM TAZHIN THANKS AMBASSADOR KHALILZAD
ON COMMON WORLD, DISCUSSES AFGHANISTAN SUPPORT

Classified By: Ambassador Richard Hoagland, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: During an October 17 meeting, Foreign Minister Tazhin thanked U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Khalilzad for his attendance at the Common World ministerial.

Tazhin told Khalilzad that he expected Kazakhstan to finalize an agreement with NATO on land transit of supplies for Afghanistan by year's end. He promised continued Kazakhstani government assistance for Afghanistan, but said that the failure of a Kazakhstani company to win a tender for an Afghan copper mine had diminished the interest of private Kazakhstani investors in Afghanistan. END SUMMARY.

APPRECIATION FOR COMMON WORLD ATTENDANCE

¶2. (C) During an October 17 meeting in Astana, Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin expressed appreciation to U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Zalmay Khalilzad for his attendance at the Common World ministerial meeting. He said that such high-level U.S. participation was very important, especially since President Nazarbayev had first raised the idea of the Common World initiative with President Bush, when he visited Washington in September 2006. Tazhin explained that the Common World had provided a rare opportunity for such a diverse group of countries, including both the United States and Iran, to come to agreement on a joint declaration.

He added that he was surprised that Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states had accepted the Astana Declaration's language on human rights. Ambassador Khalilzad said that the remarks delivered at the event had been less confrontational than he had expected, though he was surprised that Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov had chosen to focus on the Georgia conflict rather than the main topic at hand (i.e., bridging differences between the Muslim world and the West).

AFGHANISTAN LAND TRANSIT AGREEMENT BY YEAR'S END

¶3. (C) Khalilzad thanked Tazhin for Kazakhstan's support in Afghanistan and Iraq. He explained that the situation in Afghanistan is difficult, but there is hope for better

Afghanistan-Pakistan relations with new Pakistani President Zardari. He stressed that additional support is needed from the international community and the pledges from the Paris donors' conference must be fully implemented. Khalilzad said the United States very much welcomes Prime Minister Masimov's upcoming visit to Kabul. As far as Khalilzad understood, Kazakhstan is considering additional ways to help Afghanistan, including sending officers to ISAF and allowing land transit of NATO supplies through Kazakhstani territory.

¶4. (C) In response, Tazhin explained that Kazakhstan is sending two officers to ISAF headquarters and is considering sending medics to a medical unit. He expected a land transit agreement to be finalized by the end of the year. The Foreign Ministry had sent the proposed text to the Ministry of Transport and Communications. There are no political problems with the agreement, though Kazakhstan was not pleased that NATO first raised the idea of such an agreement with the Russians and only later approached Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

DISAPPOINTMENT ON AFGHAN COPPER MINE

¶5. (C) Tazhin reminded Khalilzad that Kazakhstan is implementing a \$3 million humanitarian assistance program for Afghanistan for 2008. While the financial crisis has made it difficult to persuade the government to allocate new money, Tazhin nevertheless expected Kazakhstan to continue providing such assistance in future years. Khalilzad said it would be useful if Kazakhstan could provide support, even if largely

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of a symbolic nature, to help the Afghans deal with the winter's cold weather and food shortages.

¶6. (C) Tazhin told Khalilzad that the failure of Kazakhstani copper giant KazakhMys to win last year's tender for the Aynak copper mine had dampened the interest of private Kazakhstani investors in Afghanistan. KazakhMys had spent a considerable amount of money on the tender and had been willing to build a railroad as part of the deal, but had still lost out to a Chinese company. Tazhin said that he had discussed this issue with National Security Advisor Hadley during their October 2 meeting in Washington. All Kazakhstan wants, Tazhin stressed, is a level playing field for its investors.

¶7. (C) Khalilzad asked Tazhin whether Kazakhstan might be interested in developing other resources in Afghanistan. Tazhin explained that the greatest interest was in copper, but noted that Kazakhstan has large oil and gas companies that might be interested if there are the right opportunities. Khalilzad reminded Tazhin that there is gas in northern Afghanistan. It was developed during the Soviet period, but nothing has happened with it in recent years.

WORKING DAILY ON DEMOCRATIC REFORMS

¶8. (C) Khalilzad told Tazhin that he hoped Kazakhstan would follow through on implementing further democratic reforms. Tazhin responded that this is an issue he is working on every day, noting with a smile, "I start with this every morning."

¶9. (U) Ambassador Khalilzad has not/not cleared this cable.
HOAGLAND